

The Claretians are a Catholic missionary order founded in Spain in 1849 by St. Anthony Mary Claret. In 1906, the Claretian Missionary Fathers arrived in California to work in the San Fernando Mission. Two years later, the missionaries moved their headquarters to San Gabriel Mission where they continue to preach today. In 1910, the Claretian Fathers traveled 10 miles west to expand their ministry to La Placita.

Father Rosendo Urrabazo characterizes the missionary vocation of the church as "bringing the message of God's love, mercy and justice to every part of the world." This guiding principle is clearly evident at La Placita where the Claretian Fathers' dedication to spiritual and community service makes the church a home and refuge for people of all faiths and backgrounds.

On any given weekend, thousands of parishioners from all walks of life attend religious services at La Placita offered in both English and Spanish. Whether the parishioners are homeless, recent immigrants from Mexico, Central and Latin America or vacationing families, La Placita welcomes everyone with open doors, love and compassion.

Each week, pastoral services at the church include: 30 regular Masses; weddings and Quinceañeras; 10 scheduled hours of confession; baptism celebrations (totaling more than 25,000 last year alone); and religious education programs for children, youth and adults. The church also offers a monthly program to provide liturgical services to residents of a local housing project.

In addition to addressing the spiritual needs of its parishioners, the church helps struggling families in a wide variety of ways. Assisted by more than 80 volunteers, the parish operates a full time social office that organizes community outreach services and programs, including a health clinic, English classes, food distribution for the elderly, meals for the homeless, legal aid for immigrants, income tax help and a weekly 12-step program for persons suffering from addiction.

Madam Speaker, over the past 100 years, many Claretian missionaries have dedicated their lives to serving the families of the La Placita community. This anniversary, however, three missionaries in particular will be recognized for their outstanding service at the church's May 20 centennial dinner celebration.

Selected by the centennial celebration committee for their tireless pastoral and humanitarian service, the following missionaries will be honored: Fr. Tomas Maten, CMF (1900–1975) who defended the rights of the displaced residents of the Chavez Ravine area now the site of Dodger Stadium; Fr. Luis Olivares, CMF (1934–1993) who worked tirelessly to bring the cause of the homeless and immigrants to the attention of local and national policy makers; and Fr. Albert Vazquez, CMF, (1928– ) educator and pastor who shaped the pastoral direction of the parish and its school for more than 27 years.

Today, the clergy and parishioners of La Placita continue the tremendous work and legacy of these three exemplary missionaries.

Recognizing the tremendous needs of immigrants to our country, the church is a local leader in raising awareness and support for comprehensive immigration reform. During the 1980s, the church called itself a sanctuary for refugees threatened with deportation to El Salvador. In recent months, I have had the privi-

lege of participating in two immigration town halls held at La Placita, both of which were attended by hundreds of area advocates demanding the reform of our nation's broken and unjust immigration laws. The seamless transformation of this historic church from a place of worship to a town meeting hall for political action truly typifies the Claretian Fathers' dedication to achieving justice and social change on behalf of their parishioners and our community.

Beyond the walls of La Placita, the Claretian Fathers' prayers could be heard across the country and throughout the halls of Congress on September 19, 2007 when Father Richard Estrada accepted a rare invitation to give the opening prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives. Calling on lawmakers to draw strength from their diversity and make laws to protect all of God's children, he prayed for God to, "Inspire our nation's leaders to seek justice, defend liberty and unite diverse cultures and languages."

Madam Speaker, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Claretian Missionaries' service at La Placita, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking and congratulating them for their devotion and enormous contributions on behalf of the most vulnerable in our community, and I extend to the Order our best wishes for many more years of doing God's work in the historic area of our great city's birth, Downtown Los Angeles.

#### HONORING MARJORIE BUTLER ON THE OCCASION OF HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

**HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 15, 2010*

Mr. HINCHEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Marjorie Butler on the occasion of her 100th birthday. A longtime resident of the Hudson River Valley, 43 years ago Dr. Butler helped establish the Black Studies Department at the State University of New York at New Paltz. At that time in 1967, only a handful of schools had established similar departments, but today, more than 250 colleges and universities are engaged in the exploration and analysis of the history and culture of African people in the United States, Caribbean, and Africa. Dr. Butler is truly a pioneer of this important academic discipline.

Before her retirement in 1984, as the chair of the department and a professor of psychology, she drew from her life experiences to provide an enriching learning environment for thousands of students, many of whom went on to adopt her goals of human progress and equality as their own. It is because of the leadership, personal courage and dedication of individuals like Dr. Marjorie Butler that our nation has overcome many of its greatest civil rights challenges. Her contributions and devotion to this cause must be recognized and understood and cannot be overstated.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to congratulate and honor Dr. Butler on her 100th birthday and for her many years of hard and deeply effective work and her service in the cause of social justice.

#### TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

**HON. BOB ETHERIDGE**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 14, 2010*

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4994, the Taxpayer Assistance Act of 2010. As we arrive at another tax filing deadline, I am pleased to support many of the measures to assist taxpayers and improve the Internal Revenue Code that have been discussed in the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight.

I just returned from a tax day event in my district, where I heard from several folks who live in the Second District about how they are saving money this tax year because of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and other recent tax cuts. As North Carolina's only Member of the House Committee on Ways and Means, I am proud to work to promote tax fairness for all Americans. In fact, the vast majority of middle-class North Carolinians are receiving larger refunds or paying less taxes than they were last year or the year before because of our action.

However, many Americans have difficulty navigating the complexities of the tax code. They need to know where to turn for information, which is one of the things we discussed at Monday's tax day event. I am pleased to support this bill because it will help taxpayers get assistance in filing their taxes. Under the Taxpayer Assistance Act of 2010, we will provide referrals from the IRS to Low Income Taxpayer Clinics (LITCs), increase funding for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites, expand outreach for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), make sure the IRS notifies taxpayers of unclaimed refunds, and help protect taxpayers from identity theft. H.R. 4994 will also improve tax fairness by studying the delivery of tax refunds and the effectiveness of collection alternatives. The bill also fixes the outdated tax treatment of business cell phones, so that businesses do not face the double burden of providing phones to their employees and also paying taxes for them as a benefit.

Our goal should be to make our tax code more fair and workable for individuals, families, businesses and employees across the country, and this bill does just that. Improving the process for millions of taxpaying Americans should be a bipartisan priority. I support H.R. 4994 and urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in working together across party lines and voting for its passage.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS OF FRESNO COUNTY

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 15, 2010*

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to all of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Fresno County, California, on this occasion of their 60th anniversary aptly recognized as, "60 years of Hope and Opportunity."